

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Debate has ceased. Senator Hilgert, whether it's on thin water or thin ice, I'm not sure, but you're recognized to close at this time.

SENATOR HILGERT: Thank you, Mr. President. Just...I want to respond to a couple of the comments that were made that the local governmental units, the cities, would lose some of this taxes. If the bingo game does collapse, they'll also lose the sales tax that are associated with both the pickle and the bingo sales. So again, I do believe that it's in the best interest to lower taxes before we...in order to preserve the gaming...the charitable gaming revenue. One quick example here. At the Holy Name bingo...this is from Father Ulrich...\$175,000 was earned from bingo and pickles, \$60,000 of this number was from bingo. They needed to have around 280 people for a good night, 220 to break even. Holy Name loses \$45,000 in taxes due to the 8 percent bingo tax. The school requires \$400,000 annually for tuition. There's approximately 200 children. Parents cover \$100,000 of the tuition. That leaves \$300,000 that needs to be offset. Furthermore, the bingo game hires 12 to 15 people. And one point, there is no alcohol served at these games, and the very essence of a bingo game...I mean, gosh, you can go buy a bingo game for your children at Kay-Bee Toys or something like that. This isn't big casino gambling which brings all the ills, so I disagree with that comment. Senator Will, do you want to use some of my closing?

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Senator Will.

SENATOR WILL: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. Thank you, Senator Hilgert. I certainly would echo Senator Hilgert's statements and I think rather than thin water or thin ice, this is Senator Hilgert getting his feet wet on an issue that I've been pursuing for a long time, as has Senator Hilgert's predecessor, Senator Hall. And certainly there are times and places to have full and fair debate. I think it's become apparent this may not be one, on this issue. But I think again I want to reiterate that at some point I think this body needs to understand that charitable gaming in the form of bingo is just taxed at a rate that cannot be defended. It just cannot be defended by any rational means, and I think what we need to look at and, again, I intend to continue to bring this issue before the Legislature, is the fact that we have given municipalities in the state of Nebraska unprecedented gaming